



1926 - 2026



**PIAZZA di SIENA**  
MASTER D'INZEO



# PRESS KIT

ROMA, VILLA BORGHESE  
**27-31 MAGGIO / MAY 2026**



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## **PIAZZA DI SIENA: THE GREEN PROJECT, NINE YEARS OF GREAT SPORT, RESTORATION AND BIODIVERSITY**

In **2017**, in the wake of a new and revolutionary concept, the “**Piazza di Siena Green Project**” was launched, a sporting event model which found its natural home in the Piazza di Siena Horse Show.



It was a **zero-impact** bio-architectural project, marking a complete and definitive break with the past, through the use of eco-sustainable materials and an overall vision designed to create a show reminiscent of the competitions of the early 20th century. The silica sand on the historic oval-shaped arena was removed and the **grass turf** restored, and, in line with the original design and construction plan, **Sport e Salute**, the project organiser alongside **FISE (Italian Equestrian Sports Federation)**, signed an agreement with **Roma Capitale** for the maintenance and upkeep of the Piazza di Siena area throughout the year.

In **2018**, the splendid **Ancient Grandstands** surrounding the oval-shaped arena were restored in collaboration with Roma Capitale and the **Capitoline Superintendence for Cultural Heritage**; the oval-shaped arena was given back to the city, thus resuming its sport, leisure and socialisation role for residents and tourists alike. Furthermore, the green spaces in the surrounding area were tended to, the walls repaired, and the interior of **the Casino dell'Orologio** restored.

And that's not all. The **Galoppatoio** area was **completely restored** and returned to its former glory after years of severe disrepair and neglect; it literally came back to life as an equestrian competition venue, but also as a **"Polo Stadium"**, featuring a spectacular discipline which, together with the Piazza di Siena Competition, is increasingly attracting the attention of the public.

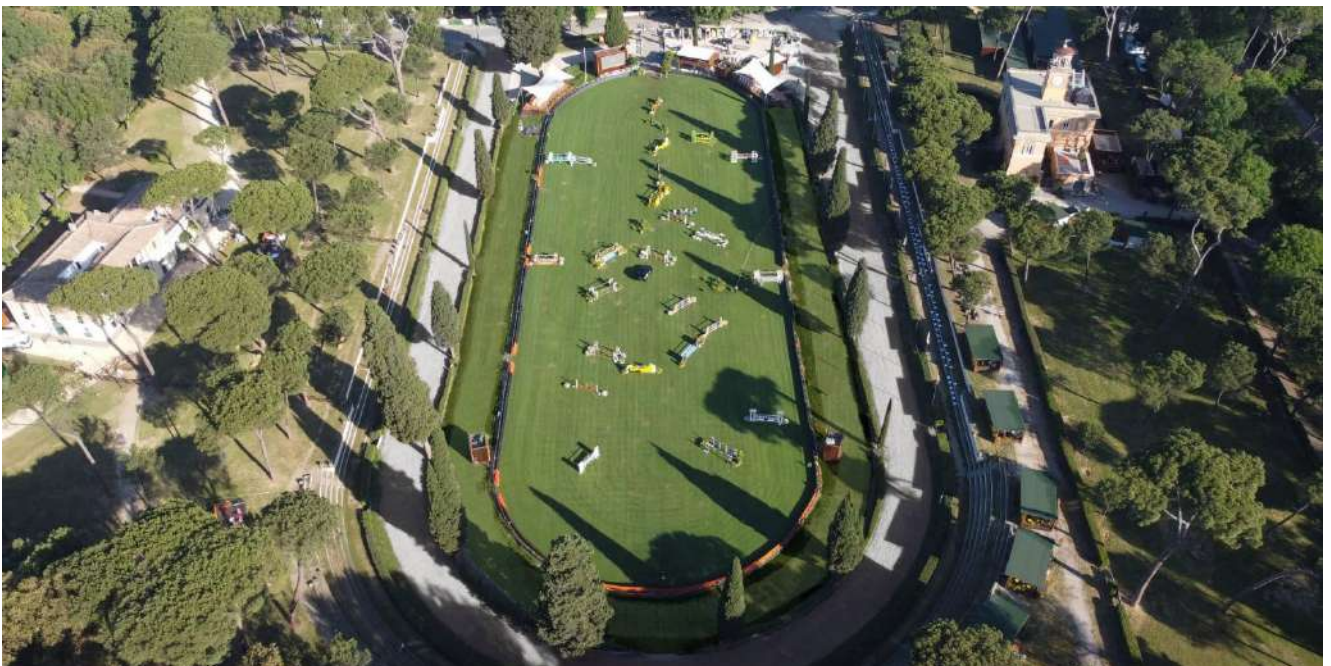
The other **momentous change** concerned the public: the "Green Project" is a gift to citizens and to equestrian sports fans, who can watch the competitions for **free**, whether from the stands or on the slopes around the arena.



The positioning of the wooden structures was designed to capitalize on **natural light**: the idea is to use the sun filtering through the century-old trees to create a fresco of light and colours in constant motion. At the same time, the relationship with **art and culture** became ever closer, with countless initiatives and "twinning partnerships": from the **Gnam** and the **Galleria Borghese** to the celebration of the 500th anniversary of **Leonardo da Vinci's** death, with contemporary artists' reinterpretations of Leonardo's Horse on display along Viale Canonica. Art, culture, but also a consistent commitment to **biodiversity**, as in the case of the "youthful cypress" planted near the oval-shaped arena.

In **2020**, the year of the pandemic, the Horse Show was put on hold, but even amidst such dramatic circumstances, the “Green Project” by Sport e Salute and FISE found an extraordinary silver lining, proving the essence of the project’s vision right: schools in the Villa Borghese area brought their young students to the oval-shaped arena for their physical education classes. A ray of **light** in the darkness of the pandemic. Then, the wooden fence surrounding the Oval was completely replaced.

The restoration of the **Valle dei Platani** (2021) was an extraordinary project, a pruning and trimming feat to restore the natural living conditions of the enormous 17th-century trees, together with the remediation of the soil “poisoned” by waste and pollution to the point of endangering the very lives of these “Sentinels of Rome’s Eternity”.



Over the years, protective barriers and a guided trail have been installed with the aim of further informing and raising awareness among visitors. This project, like others, was implemented with the invaluable and constant support of the “**Friends of Villa Borghese**” association, an organisation that has long-since been passionately committed to the protection of this park, from its **architecture** to its **plant heritage**.

In **2022**, the biodiversity-oriented work continued with the “**ZeroDIE**” project: the gravel on the 8-meter wide and 380-meter long ring around the oval-shaped arena was removed and replaced with the same **turf** used on the competition ground, covering an area of over **3,000** square metres. The image captured from above by drones is spectacular, featuring the “green” shape of a huge “Zero” that signifies “No” to Deforestation, Impact and Emissions, in the form of the acronym **DIE**. The competition’s commitment to biodiversity was acknowledged by creating the acronym-hashtag #ZeroDIE, so “Zero” together with “Deforestation, Impact and Emissions”.

Then in **2023**, that turf ring was joined to the competition arena. In the meantime, and thanks to the organisers' maintenance investment on the area and in perfect harmony with Roma Capitale's Capitoline Superintendence for Cultural Heritage, a major extraordinary project was initiated to fully restore and revamp the **Mostra dell'Acqua Felice**, situated at the corner of Viale Canonica and Piazza delle Canestre, just like the walls around the square. The sight is incredible, as the restoration team's work brought to light the bas-reliefs, the fountains with dragon heads and the pink marble works of the basins, featuring precious marble from now-exhausted quarries and therefore of inestimable artistic value.



At the same time, Sport e Salute signed an agreement with Roma Capitale for the **maintenance** of the green spaces in the area stretching from Piazza di Siena to Via Pinciana, while continuing to regularly upgrade the historic oval-shaped arena through a series of overseeding, sanding, decompaction, fertilisation **measures** and the application of turf bio-activators and root-stimulating treatments. This initiative allows residents and tourists to use the arena as a veritable **open-air green gym** for their recreational and sporting activities.

In the **2024** edition, Piazza di Siena once again became a "museum hub" hosting major art exhibitions in the Villa Borghese museums. For the first time, the **Pietro Canonica Museum** located on the opposite side of the Casino dell'Orologio, hosted the exhibition curated by Sandro Santolini "**Questo è Aquilino figlio del vento**", from May 22 to September 15, 2024, featuring portraits of Rospigliosi's horses from the Capitoline collections.

At the same time, the Piazza di Siena Competition venue also hosted a sculptural relief – “**Il Rilievo del Cavaliere**” dating back to the first half of the 2nd century AD, which is currently on display at the Casino dell’Orologio. This work, consisting of eleven fragments before the extraordinary reconstruction effort, had been lying “dormant” in a storage facility since 1989. It was restored thanks to the collaboration between the organisers of the Piazza di Siena Competition, **FISE, Sport e Salute** and **Roma Capitale – Capitoline Superintendence for Cultural Heritage**. It features a young horseman in scale armour and boots decorated with a lion’s fur, holding the reins of a horse in his right hand.



The head, turned towards the horse, although ancient, originally belonged to another sculptural work. The type of armour, the horse’s exquisite harness, the remains of the mysterious horseman and, above all, the fact that the head was not part of the original work, have been at the centre of a veritable mystery, to the point of suggesting that we are looking at a **figure of the highest rank**, fuelling the debate over his identity right up to the most intriguing hypothesis: that young man may be **Emperor Trajan**.

The 2025 edition was hailed with the restoration of the “**Fontana dei Pupazzi**” and with other major conservation and maintenance works of the oval-shaped arena and the areas adjacent to Piazza di Siena. The Fontana dei Pupazzi, one of the **symbols of Villa Borghese** and Piazza di Siena, was completely restored to its former beauty in collaboration with Roma Capitale and the Capitoline Superintendence for Cultural Heritage. This fountain, built between the late 18th and early 19th centuries, was the target of a serious theft in 1983: the central sculptural group, consisting of a vase with two cherubs and dolphins, fell prey to art thieves.

This theft followed the earlier removal of the central spout, which occurred at an unspecified time, the same as the disappearance of the four masks that adorned the basin.

Last year, on the final day of the Piazza di Siena – Master d’Inzeo CSIO, a simple “**water ceremony**” took place: the management of Sport e Salute and FISE, together with representatives of the Capitoline Superintendency for Cultural Heritage, brought the **fountain back to life**, opening the water supply and turning the levers that activate the new water system. The restoration works revamped the fountain’s original appearance and its water jets, as well as its visual significance linked to the aesthetic perception of the Piazza di Siena square and the Viale dei Cipressi above it. Furthermore, in full compliance with modern requirements regarding water conservation and environmental protection, the serious problems of leakage and water runoffs affecting the semicircular area beneath Piazza di Siena were finally solved.

But there is more. The restoration of the Fontana dei Pupazzi sends a message in support of the **recovery of stolen art works**, which is the focus of the operational activities of the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage. According to the official figures, in 2024, this special unit officers recovered 80,437 items, seized 2,804 forgeries, and reported 2,621 offences, of which 343 for damaging the landscape. Without considering the priceless cultural value of these items, the sheer economic value of the cultural artefacts recovered in 2024 reached the staggering figure of €130 million, in addition to the €73 million from other seizures handled by this police force.

And here comes the 2026 centenary edition of Piazza di Siena, which brings along another major restoration project: the **Fontana dei Cavalli Marini** to be unveiled during the Piazza di Siena Rome CSIO, together with other important works to maintain and upkeep one of the most beautiful places in the world.



## PIAZZA DI SIENA: A LEAP INTO THE PAST SPANNING A CENTURY

For the **2026 edition**, the CSIO Roma Piazza di Siena -Master d'Inzeo will present a **special logo** to symbolise a century of history, great sport, and genuine passion for horses. This new logo encapsulates a **century of excitement, tradition, and vision**, propelling the event into the future while staying true to its roots.



The Official International Horse Show of Rome first took place in **1926**. From its early days at the Villa Glori and Parioli racetracks to the disruptions caused by historical events such as the wartime between 1941 and 1946, the 1960 Rome Olympics, and the 1998 World Equestrian Games, Piazza di Siena has emerged as an **iconic venue** for this enduring event, writing memorable chapters in sporting history and continuing to do so to this day.

The **centenary of the CSIO** also aligns with the **centenary of the Italian Equestrian Sports Federation (FISE)** foundation: a significant double milestone celebrating a hundred years of shared history and growth. It has been a century of intense living in the name of sport, tradition, culture, social commitment, glamour and a timeless passion for horses.



Federazione  
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Sport  
Equestri



# ROLEX AND EQUESTRIANISM



Rolex celebrates human achievement, recognizing the journey marked by milestones and emotions that culminates in defining moments – determined by a path followed, not just a trophy. The ties between Rolex and equestrianism were established in 1957 when the British show jumper Pat Smythe became the first Testimonee in the sport. A true pioneer, she won more grand prix events on her own horses in more countries than anyone in the sport's history. Since this partnership began, Rolex has cultivated an enduring legacy with equestrianism, standing alongside the finest international riders, competitions and institutions. The brand's contribution to excellence is based on a respect for this heritage, encouraging modernization while cherishing the tradition and elegance of this prestigious sport. Rolex maintains a deep appreciation for the unique bond forged between horse and rider as they strive for perfect harmony on the greatest arenas. Considered the sport's ultimate prize, the Rolex Grand Slam of Show Jumping was introduced more than a decade ago, and comprises. The Dutch Masters, the CHIO Aachen, the CSIO Spruce Meadows 'Masters' Tournament and the CHI Geneva. Rolex Testimonee Scott Brash is the only rider to achieve this feat, having ridden Hello Sanctos to victory in three Majors across 2014 and 2015.

Today, fellow members of the Rolex family, including Kent Farrington, Martin Fuchs, Steve Guerdat, Sophie Hinner and Richard Vogel, continue their own quest to reach

the highest levels of performance. Rolex's long-standing presence at the heart of equestrianism is highlighted by its affiliation with international competitions that represent the pinnacle of the sport, from the four Majors to the events making up the Rolex Series.

## ABOUT ROLEX SERIES

The Rolex Series brings together seven of the world's most respected equestrian competitions, each supported by the Swiss watchmaker. These historic events have many qualities in common, offering some of the finest infrastructure and facilities, centuries-old traditions and the highest level of competition. All seven share the honour of having been won by some of the greatest riders to have graced the sport. They reflect the brand's own unwavering commitment to high performance and boast a background deeply rooted in equestrianism, capturing the timeless essence of the sport while embracing innovation with a continuous drive for improvement.

Rolex is Official Timepiece of the CSIO Roma Piazza di Siena, a Rolex Series Event held in the magnificent gardens of the Villa Borghese, located in the centre of Rome, Italy. The event is renowned for its breathtaking setting and rich heritage, attracting show jumping enthusiasts from around the world. Since 2018, Rolex has also been the Title Sponsor of the esteemed Rolex Gran Premio Roma, which will take place on Sunday, 31 May 2026 at 12.30 p.m. ■



## OVER ONE MILLION EUROS' WORTH OF PRIZE MONEY FOR THE CENTENNIAL

The **centennial edition** confirms the **Rome Piazza di Siena - Master d'Inzeo CSIO5\*** as one of the most important events in the international show jumping calendar.

With all the nine competitions taking place in the oval-shaped arena, **Villa Borghese** becomes once again an extraordinary attractor for equestrian sports enthusiasts from all over the world, who will be able to watch the riders' and their horses' feats free of charge from the stands and the areas surrounding the arena. The Rome CSIO5\* is part of the **Rolex Series** and its prize money this year will be again in excess of **one million euros**, 500,000 of which is up for grabs in the Rolex Gran Premio Roma.



The competition program begins on **Thursday May 28** with the “winning round” **Premio Safe Riding**, featuring 145-cm jumps and 29,000 euros' worth of prize money. The first horse will enter the arena at 9.00 am.



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This is followed by another two events: **Premio MAG**, a two-consecutive-phase class (145 cm), and **Premio Range Rover**, a round-the-clock category (150 cm), with 29,000 and 30,000 euros' worth of prize money respectively.



**Friday May 29** will set the CSIO in full swing. After **Premio ENI**, a 1.55m round-the-clock category (€57,000) in the morning, all eyes will be on the **Intesa Sanpaolo Nations Cup** featuring two rounds (the first starting at 14:30) and **ten teams** ready to vie for a prize fund of **€220,000**.

The nations competing for the highest prestige in the roll of honour of this historic competition on the 1.60-metre jump courses designed by **Uliano Vezzani** are: **Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Mexico, the United States of America, Sweden** and, of course, **Italy**.

Click [HERE](#) for the roll of honour of the Intesa Sanpaolo Nations Cup.





**Saturday May 30** is another day not to be missed due to its technically demanding and spectacular competitions. The day kicks off with the **Premio KEP Italia**, a 1.45m round-the-clock test (€15,000), followed by the challenging **Trofeo Loro Piana**, with 105,500 euros' worth of prize money. The **Loro Piana Trophy**, a mixed category over a course with 1.55m jumps, serves as a qualifier for Sunday's Grand Prix and it also provides points for the special **Master d'Inzeo** prize, named after the two great champions, Piero and Raimondo. The day will end on a high note with the thrilling **Sei Barriere Loro Piana** (€20,000).

Click [HERE](#) for the six-bar hall of fame.

**Sunday 31 May** features the grand finale with the **Rolex Gran Premio Roma**, with no less than **500,000 euros'** worth of prize money. Fifty riders will take centre stage on the Piazza di Siena turf from 12.30 pm in a competition with an extraordinary appeal that may define an entire career.

However, the two rounds of the Grand Prix, featuring 1.60-metre jumps, are not just about victory and generous prize money, but about a place in the history of international show jumping.

Click [HERE](#) for the Gran Premio Roma roll of honour.



## THE FRECCHE TRICOLORI BRING EXCITEMENT FROM THE SKY

It is an eagerly awaited event for the public in Piazza di Siena. For this centennial too, the **Frecce Tricolori** will fly across the sky above Villa Borghese to reiterate the **international character of the historic horse show** and the identity of our country.

The extraordinary aerobatic displays over the oval –shaped arena by the MB-339 P.A.N. Aermacchi aircraft of the National Aerobatic Team will take place on **Friday 29 May**, in line with the tradition, on the day of the **Intesa Sanpaolo Nations Cup**, just a few minutes before the start of the first round of the prestigious team competition.



The Freccie Tricolori's first, historic flight over Piazza di Siena took place during the 2018 CSIO, followed by the one in 2019 before the **President of the Republic**, Sergio Mattarella.

To mark the **100th anniversary of the Italian Air Force** in 2023, two Eurofighter Typhoons flew over the crowd in Piazza di Siena and the teams competing in the Intesa Sanpaolo Nations Cup, before handing the baton back to the Freccie Tricolori, the pride and joy of Italy.

## AN OUTSTANDING STAGE IN HOMAGE TO SIENA

The **origins** of Piazza di Siena lie in the history of Villa Borghese, the vast monumental park commissioned in the early **17th century** by Cardinal **Scipione Borghese**, Pope Paul V's nephew.

But only in the 18th century was this area turned into its shape that was to make it famous: Prince **Marcantonio IV Borghese** commissioned the architect **Antonio Asprucci** to create a spectacular space surrounded by greenery, designed according to the new principles of European landscape architecture.



This is how Piazza di Siena came into being, its name evoking the **sienese origins** of the Borghese family. The large grassy oval-shaped square was designed as a kind of **natural open-air theatre**, harmoniously blending architecture, landscape and monumental vistas. Asprucci's design was part of the transformation of Villa Borghese into a modern "English-style" garden, inspired by a vision of nature that was less constrained and geometric than traditional Baroque models.

Over time, Piazza di Siena gradually changed its purpose. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the area began to host **sporting events and equestrian competitions**, eventually becoming one of the **international symbols** of show jumping. The turning point was in 1922 with the launch of the Rome International Horse Show; a few years later, Piazza di Siena became its permanent hosting site, thus becoming part of the history of world equestrianism as one of the most iconic and prestigious venues on the international scene.



The **Rome CSIO** (Concours de Saut International Officiel) was recognised in **1926** by the International Equestrian Federation with this prestigious designation, which is awarded to the jumping events (only one per country) featuring the Nations Cup. After two editions held at the Villa Glori Racecourse and a third at the Parioli Racecourse, the show jumping competition returned to Piazza di Siena in 1929. This world-renowned gem witnessed some extraordinary achievements for Italian riders, with unforgettable battles among exceptional protagonists. It will suffice to think of **Alessandro Bettoni**, the **d'Inzeo brothers** or **Graziano Mancinelli** and of the other riders who are in the global show-jumping hall of fame.



The CSIO was **discontinued** only from 1941 to 1946, during the Second World War. Then it was moved to Turin in **1960**, the year in which Piazza di Siena hosted the individual events of the Rome Olympic Games, conquered by the d'Inzeo brothers (Raimondo with a gold medal and Piero with a silver medal). In **1998**, it granted its stage to the World Equestrian Games held at Stadio Flaminio and it was cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic.

In **2000**, Piazza di Siena was back in the limelight of the global equestrian scene by hosting two CSIO events: the traditional Spring Competition and the FEI Samsung Nations Cup Final in early October. In **2003**, this jumping competition was included in the Top League, the circuit under the aegis the world's leading equestrian sports body, which brought together the eight best CSIO events in the world, thus acknowledging the Rome event's place among the elite.

It has always been one of the few events chosen by the International Equestrian Federation to be in the annual circuits of the most prestigious Nations Cups. Since **2024**, it has been included in the illustrious **Rolex Series** alongside Wellington (USA), La Baule (France), Falsterbo (Sweden), Dinard (France), Dublin (Ireland) and Brussels (Belgium).

